

LOEFLINGIA SQUARROSA (CARYOPHYLLACEAE): NEW TO LOUISIANA

Christopher Reid and Patricia Faulkner

Louisiana Natural Heritage Program
Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries
2000 Quail Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000

ABSTRACT

Loeflingia squarrosa is reported as new to Louisiana. A single station was discovered in the xeric sandylands of Caddo Parish in northwest Louisiana.

KEY WORDS: *Loeflingia*, Caryophyllaceae, Louisiana, Sandylands

While conducting rare plant surveys in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, *Loeflingia squarrosa* Nutt. was collected, apparently for the first time in the state. The material was not recognized in the field by the authors and was collected as an unknown. It was later identified as *L. squarrosa*. This species is not reported for Louisiana by Thomas & Allen (1996). It was only recently discovered in Arkansas, in Miller County, which borders Caddo Parish (Singhurst and Holmes 1999). This species is recorded for Cass and Marion Counties in adjacent Texas, and also in Shelby County, to the south, which borders DeSoto and Sabine parishes (Turner et al. 2003).

Loeflingia squarrosa is a characteristic species of xeric sandylands in the West Gulf Coastal Plain (MacRoberts et al. 2002). We collected *L. squarrosa* at a site known as Kendrick Road Sandylands (see MacRoberts & MacRoberts 1995 for description of vegetation) on 7 April 2004. This site includes small areas of thick, fire suppressed sandy woodlands, and considerable area of pastures, watermelon patches and roadsides on sandy soil. Despite the degraded condition, the site still supports many state-rare plants. The *Loeflingia* was collected in a sandy fallow field, with sparse vegetative cover.

Associate species included *Astragalus leptocarpus* Torr. & Gray, *A. soxmaniorum* Lundell, *Clematis reticulata* Walt., *Cnidoscolus texanus* (Muell.-Arg.) Small, *Evax candida* (Torr. & Gray) Gray, *Hymenopappus artemisiifolius* DC., *Lithospermum caroliniense* (Walt. ex J. F. Gmel.) MacM., *Opuntia humifusa* (Raf.) Raf., and *Phacelia strictiflora* (Engelm. & Gray) Gray. When first collected, the site was for sale and access was gained by calling the seller from the field and receiving permission to go onto the site. A return visit on 1 April 2005 revealed that the parcel of land had been sold and the field had been disked in preparation for planting (most likely watermelons). Very little sandhill woodland habitat remains in Caddo Parish (personal observation; MacRoberts and MacRoberts 1995). However, a number of rare sandhill plants manage to persist in disturbed areas such as roadsides, power line and gas pipeline rights-of-way, pastures, and oil and gas fields. *Loeflingia squarrosa* is a small, easily-overlooked plant and could be present and overlooked in sandylands further south and east in Bienville, Natchitoches, Sabine, Vernon, and Winn parishes.

Specimen Cited: LOUISIANA. Caddo Parish: Kendrick Road Sandhills, N of Kendrick Rd. just E of jct. w/ Atlanta-Vivian Rd. (PR 119) and 1.5 mi W of jct. w/ LA 1; SW1/4 SW1/4 S11 T22N R16W; 325422N, 0935956W, 7 April 2004, Reid, Faulkner, & Jones 4855 (LSU).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We appreciate Michael and Barbara MacRoberts for providing helpful comments on the manuscript and for providing distribution data for *Loeflingia squarrosa* in Texas. Barbara MacRoberts aided us with the initial determination of the specimen. We are also thankful to Theo Witsell of Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission for providing information on the status and distribution in Arkansas. We appreciate Tom Wendt of TEX-LL and Lee Luckeydoo of BRIT for checking their collections for Louisiana specimens of *Loeflingia squarrosa*.

LITERATURE CITED

- MacRoberts, B.R. and M.H. MacRoberts.** 1995. Floristics of xeric sandhills in northwestern Louisiana. *Phytologia* 79: 123-131.
- MacRoberts, B.R., M.H. MacRoberts and J.C. Cathey.** 2002. Floristics of xeric sandylands in the post oak savannah region of east Texas. *Sida* 20: 373-386.
- Singhurst, J.R. and W.C. Holmes.** 1999. Noteworthy collections: Arkansas. *Castanea* 64: 276-277.
- Thomas, R.D. and C. M. Allen.** 1996. Atlas of the vascular flora of Louisiana: Vol. II: Dicotyledons. Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, Baton Rouge.
- Turner, B.L., H. Nichols, G. Denny and O. Doron.** 2003. Atlas of the vascular plants of Texas, Vol. 1: Dicots. *Sida Botanical Miscellany*, 24: 1-648.